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LETTER DATED 29 DECEMBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On 19 December 1999 United States naval forces intercepted the freighter HYBY 2, carrying 14,538 tons of Vietnamese rice destined for Iraq, and prevented it from proceeding to the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr. They did so on the pretext that the vessel's holds were full of sacks of rice and that it was not possible to inspect them. The freighter is still at anchor in the inspection zone assigned to it by the United States forces.

In addition to the fact that they constitute open interference with merchant shipping in the Arabian Gulf, the acts of piracy committed by the United States forces on station in this area have the purpose of preventing or delaying the delivery of foodstuffs and other humanitarian items to Iraq.

The Government of Iraq condemns and deprecates the arbitrary use of force by the United States in order to prevent the delivery of foodstuffs to Iraq and thus increase the suffering of the people of Iraq caused by the unjust embargo. It urges you to intervene with a view to halting United States practices that are incompatible with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the most elementary standards of civilized conduct among nations.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Saeed H. HASAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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